



GENDER EQUALITY ANNUAL REPORT 2016

A short introduction

We can and must continue to publish our Gender Report. This is not some routine or minor action, among the many activities and disclosures of a law-abiding public body, but rather a massive effort on behalf of a major University with more than 85,000 students. The planning and production of this document are expressions of a precise political will that, in the case of Alma Mater, is embodied in the recommendations and checks promoted by the Guarantee Committee, that were followed by the executive decision of the Board of Governors and the related financial support.

Thus the Alma Mater Gender Report, included in the CUG 2014-2017 Positive Actions Plan and published for the first time in 2016, has - with good fortune - reached its second edition in 2017.

The University of Bologna was the second major Italian University to publish this document, after the University of Naples Federico II, and there are still less than 10 Italian Universities - the first being the University of Ferrara - that have decided to make public, in whole or in part, a gender analysis of their students, teachers, technical and administrative staff and University bodies, while also explaining their actions, year by year, to improve gender balance and enhance the visibility of women in the academic world.

While it is widely held that the situation outside of Italy is better, this is unfortunately often not the case. Gender inequality and poor dissemination of facts are a generalised problem. Even now, few Universities in Europe collect and organise such data, let alone allocate a specific budget to the annual publication of a Gender Report.

There is still no unambiguous English term to define it: Gender Budget or Gender Budgeting are sometimes used, but mostly address forward-looking aspects in largely economic and financial terms including, for example, the financial support provided for Positive Action Plans. Gender Report best defines the nature of the document but, using this term in search engines or to

query databases returns very few hits, sometimes being considered synonymous with Women's Report. Probably the most appropriate and promising term, adopted by the European Commission and UNESCO, is Gender Equality Annual Report which will be the title of the Executive Summary of the Alma Mater Gender Report. We hope that our use of a harmonised name will help this report on social sustainability to join the ranks of those documents deemed essential for every organisation.

The regular annual publication of our Gender Report, its independence with respect to other background documents such as the Social Responsibility Report, the collection at each stage of separate gender data in electronic form - ideally by each University structure - and the adoption of new methods for the presentation of data will, in future, provide a dynamic and historical view and understanding of the impact of University, national and European policies on gender equality and the resulting trends.

These specific actions were included in the Gender Equality Plan approved this year by Alma Mater in the context of Horizon 2020 PLOTINA^a "Promoting gender balance and inclusion in research, innovation and training" (2016-2020). This European project has led five Universities and one Research Centre, coordinated by the University of Bologna, to develop detailed gender equality plans - independent but harmonised - to be pursued together over the same period (2016-20), in a sort of organisational twinning that involves constant discussion and the will to accept periodic external assessments.

The Gender Report publishes information with the ambition, by constant renewal and improvement of its presentation, to make it clear and immediate, readable on paper and ever more suitable for website consultation and, in future, updates in real time.

Its purpose is to "expose the unfairness of gender roles and opportunities and, taking account of the different needs, help to identify and tackle the principal issues, thereby

making possible the correction of gender imbalance" (EC strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015^b).

Regular publication of this document may help to understand if the imbalances and stereotypes identified in the various disciplines are diminished by good policies and if the glass ceiling and leaky pipeline phenomena are reduced. The constant loss of young female minds arises not so much in the early years of economic independence, but rather during the subsequent struggle to maintain a work-life balance, when women tend to abandon their academic careers or drastically reduce their aspirations and expectations.

Gender fairness is not a question of equal numbers, or the gender of each individual who reaches a strategic position; rather, gender fairness relates to the composition of the community as a whole. Our future will be more sustainable and shared if there is greater balance in the composition of all roles and positions. It must be possible for men and women to aspire to positions of responsibility, scale back their commitments at specific times in their lives and later return to compete and run again, without being excluded. The interpretation of work that accompanies us throughout our lives must become more fluid and inclusive.

Sometimes highlighting the rights of women seems to be a rearguard action, as if the word "feminist" - supported

by action in favour of women's careers - has become dated or unfashionable. Public and private violence against women, often accompanied by arrogance and ignorance, a desire to control and fear, demonstrates however that there is a continuing need for proactive measures to ensure that autonomy and pride in a full and independent role are always possible.

Even today UNESCO^c states: "Until now women have been particularly marginalised from cultural life. They have had to overcome numerous barriers in order to obtain equal access to films, theatrical productions, the arts, music and heritage. They have been prevented from developing their full potential, thus hindering inclusive and sustainable global social development".

This document, for which grateful thanks go to Prof. Benedetta Siboni, Project Supervisor, and to the Scientific and Operational Committee, seeks to push the academic community towards acceptance of the idea that greater fairness and diversity need not be scary, but instead will enable cultural life to flourish further and make the future more sustainable.

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a. www.plotina.eu

b. http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/strategy_equality_women_men_en.pdf

c. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/gender-and-culture/gender-equality-and-culture/the-report/>

